



# Pioneers

## Grinnell



Jasper County  
I-80 Eastbound at milepost 181  
Artist: William Conway  
Completed: November 1999



A favorite for children, the search for the word “PIONEER” in large letters across the landscape keeps the younger traveler entertained, while more wistful wanderers are treated to one of the best views of the Iowa countryside down one of many nature trails.



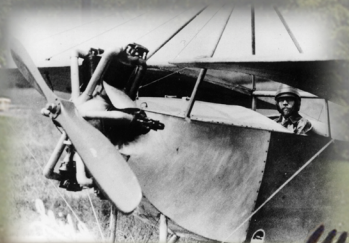
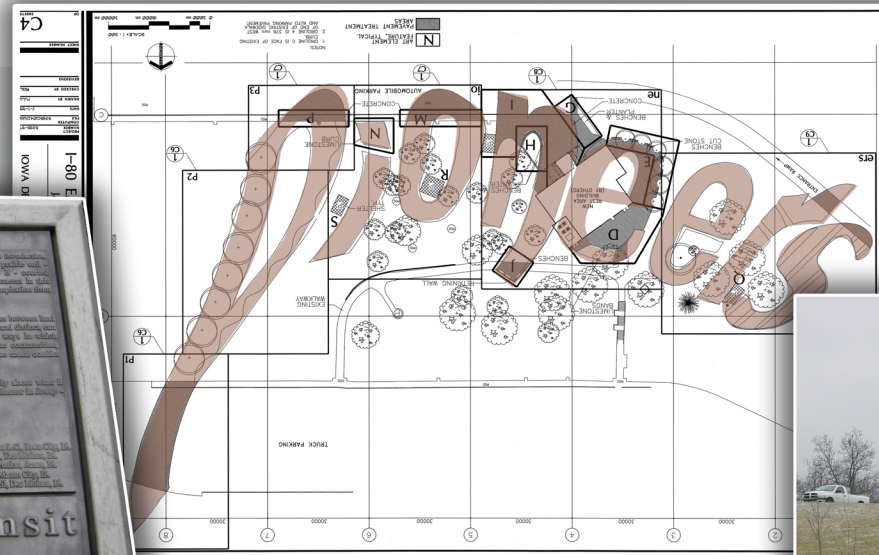
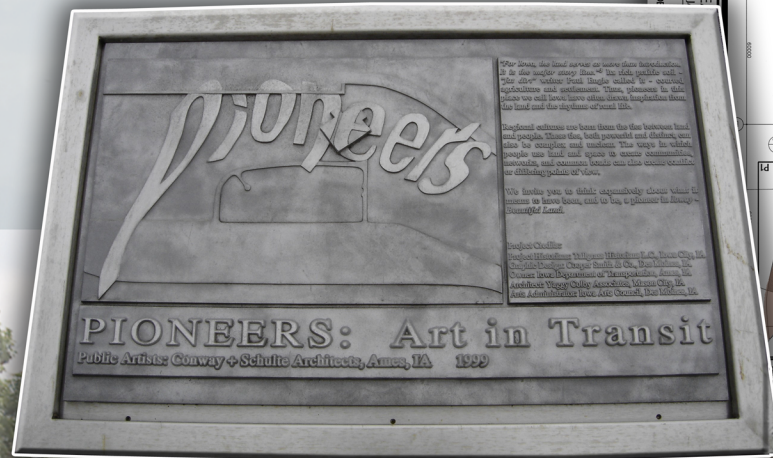
In August and September millions of monarch butterflies light at this site on their migration south.



On days when the weather doesn’t lend itself to outdoor exploration, stories and photos embedded on the tile walls inside the structure tell the tales of early Iowa settlers.



For those non-Midwesterners, one of the wall blocks is glass containing shelled corn in an airtight container.



“For Iowa, the land serves as more than introduction. It is the major story line.”<sup>3</sup> Its rich prairie soil – “fat dirt” writer Paul Engle called it – courted agriculture and settlement. Thus, pioneers in this place we call Iowa have often drawn inspiration from the land and the rhythms of rural life.

Regional cultures are born from the ties between land and people. These ties, both powerful and distinct, can also be complex and unclear. The ways in which people use land and space to create communities, networks, and common bonds can also create conflict or differing points of view.

We invite you to think expansively about what it means to have been, and to be, a pioneer in *Ioway—Beautiful Land*.

